

From: James Bach
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/5/02 4:43pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

In my humble opinion, the settlement with Microsoft is fair and equitable. Give it a rest, and let MS get back to supplying the products that people want to buy and use!

Of course, I don't think the DOJ should have been picking-on Microsoft in the first place . . . it is just another example of the sore losers of the country (Netscape, Lotus, Oracle, etc.) whining and complaining about not being able to compete and needing the government to come-in and "level the playing field" . . . like affirmative action. Again, another case of someone having a dream, working hard, making a product (or products) that people want to buy/use, and then being punished because they were TOO successful. Certainly a lesson (to NOT work hard for fear of being persecuted by those who don't/can't) I do NOT want to teach my kids.

Did Microsoft strong-arm OEM suppliers to install his operating system and web-browser on their newly-sold systems? Yes. Did he FORCE them to do it? No. They DID have options and alternatives. They could have offered other operating systems, or even NO operating system. They could have charged a bit more per system to sell it with JUST Windows and NOT Internet Explorer. There was nothing that Microsoft did that prevented computer makers from selling systems configured how they (or the buying public) wanted them. There is nothing in Windows that prevents users from installing other office suite or web-browsers . . . I've been using Netscape for years and years. Netscape and IE both co-exist quite nicely.

I've built my own systems from scratch, and I could (and did) put ANY operating system, office suite, and/or browser on them that I wanted. I chose Windows because it is easy to use, and ALL of the software in the world (that I want to use) runs on Windows. I chose Internet Explorer for web-browsing because of some of its better features/capabilities. I chose Netscape for e-mail because of some of its better features/capabilities (and because there are fewer viruses and hacks against it), instead of MS Outlook. Yes, I use MS Office (Word and Excel) at home, but I could have bought Lotus or WordPerfect. I chose Office because that's what I use at work, and I do NOT want to learn two different packages. But, that was MY choice. Nobody put a gun against my head. I could have installed LINUX or OS2, but then I'd only be able to run about 5% of software I desire.

The computing world is better-off because of Microsoft, precisely BECAUSE of the benefits that a centralized, core, standards-based OpSys can provide. At work I'm forced to use a UNIX workstation.

Unfortunately, UNIX is not UNIX is not UNIX; it is different from platform (machine) to machine. In the UNIX workstation world you are FORCED to use the UNIX (and the related "Window Manager") that is shipped by the hardware maker. I have an HP machine, so I have to use Hewlett Packards' (gag me with a fork!) version of UNIX and "Desktop Environment". The software engineer who sits across from me uses a Sun workstation, and has to use Solaris (luck him!). Because there is no "core" or "standards setting" entity in the UNIX world, UNIX applications suck when it comes to consistent look/feel, modus operandi, and data-exchange between applications. Copy and Paste of formatted data??? What is THAT?? Doesn't exist on UNIX. All you can copy/paste is raw ASCII text. Jeez, thanx. Because Microsoft dictates how the Windows environment works, on ALL platforms that run it, the vast majority of PC applications look/feel/act/behave the same (or VERY similar). Because Microsoft dictates how the Windows environment works, virtually ALL applications can copy/paste formatted text and tabular or image data back/forth between themselves. I hate the "Tower of Babel" that exists in UNIXland so much (as do my fellow engineers in my company) that we've been pushing our IT folks for years to throw-away UNIX in favor of WindowsNT. Our dream is starting to come true. Engineering management, who PAYS for the computers in our department, finally told the IT folks to buy Windows2000 machines, and to exchange our UNIX software licenses for NT licenses. UNIX has been around longer than Microsoft, and UNIX IS more stable (crash-proof) than Windows . . . however, because there is no centralized core of "standards setters", it has never, and never will, become as user-friendly and easy-to-use as Windows. I don't mind having to reboot my system every once in a while if while I'm using it I'm much more productive than the rock-solid, stable system!

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